



# ***Spiritual Journey***

***Spiritual Teachers***

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Sciences***



## ***The Institute of Metaphysical Sciences***

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**Course 5- Bachelor Program**  
**Segment 1- An Approach to Spiritual Growth**  
**By Saiyra Akbar and Shahir A. A**

**Introduction**

*"The teaching's voice is total silence, amid the ringing wind chimes." Zen Master Hengzhi*

*"Researchers speculate that primitive hunter-gather societies may have discovered meditation and its altered states of consciousness, while starting at the flames of their fires. Over thousands of years, meditation evolved into a structured practice. Indian scriptures called "tantras" mentioned meditation techniques 5000 years ago."*

<https://iml.jou.ufl.edu/projects/spring05/Luft/history.htm>

*In this course I will discuss how meditation is the vehicle through which one can attain inner calm and awakened spiritual consciousness, leading one to transform their life into a more creative, abundant, and joyful state. The main objective of meditation is to bring about an awakened spiritual consciousness, enabling one to live with higher awareness and creative expression. Through meditation, we can find our most inner center so that we can find the source of peace in our outer world. In our awakened spiritual state, we begin to know ourselves better, therefore we can make better choices and solve our problems rationally. At the same time, our connection with God, the Divine Being is re-established, leading to improved functionalities and intelligence, and spiritual awareness.*

*Meditation has been practiced since time unknown. Inner calm and peace expand the concept of knowing ourselves and the universe we live in. Coming close to God and knowing we have been the secret desire of all humans. A vital aspect of meditation is stilling the mind, the thoughts, and this can be done by the simple act of becoming aware of the breath. There are several ways to get to our inner self but the most important is through becoming aware of the breath. The breathing process directly affects our state of mind and the thought process and thus our*

*psychological being. By controlling the breath, we can control our thoughts. Larry Rosenberg says in his book, 'Breath by Breath: The Liberating Practice of Insight Meditation', that, "The simple vehicle of the breath takes the practitioner from calming the mind all the way to the deepest wisdom, to nirvana."*

*All religions, philosophies, and cultures have been practicing Meditation in one form or another. Throughout history, humans have practiced meditation to attain peace and relaxation and to find a more meaningful life by connecting to God. There are many types of meditation techniques and practices that can help one to become spiritually awakened and enhance the meditative experience. Visualizations, chanting, music, crystals, aromas, and even the act of simple prayer can be used to attain meditative states.*

*Finally, the benefits of meditation are limitless. Research has shown that health is improved physically, mentally, and emotionally. One can live life with more awareness and clarity along with an inner satisfaction that brings the joy of being alive and well.*

## **Review of Literature**

*I will begin by listing the books that I have used in writing this paper. A book that brought a different aspect of meditation to me, is written by Thich Nhat Hanh and Nguyen Anh Huong, and the book is called "Walking Meditation". This book gives guided meditations on how to practice meditation in your daily life. It put focus on moving meditation and how to incorporate it into our daily lives. Thich Nhat Hanh is a Vietnamese peace activist, teacher, and Zen master who has written many books on meditation, attaining, and living in peace with the world around us. He is also a great spiritual leader of our time and the founder of the Order of Interbeing. Thich Nhat Hanh has also been nominated for the Nobel Prize by Martin Luther King Jr. Nguyen Anh Huong is one of his prized students, also a teacher of Mindfulness Meditation Techniques and has been teaching in the US since 1988. Together they have written "Walking Meditation". In this book, they explain how the simple act of walking can create a peaceful state of being. It goes on to explain how by being mindful of every step we take, we can connect to the earth and begin to feel joy in every step, we can smell the flowers, trees, and nature around with more clarity. Thich Nhat Hanh goes on to emphasize that meditation can be done by performing our daily chores, by*

walking and even jogging. Walking Meditation begins with breathing mindfully and becoming aware of the breath and controlling it to silence the mind

Another great book is *“Breath by Breath: The Liberating Practice of Insight Meditation”*, by Larry Rosenberg with David Guy. Larry Rosenberg is a teacher of Buddhism and owns the Cambridge Insight Meditation Center, Cambridge Massachusetts. He has a Ph.D. in Social Psychology and has also trained in the Japanese Philosophy of Zen; His book *“Breath by Breath”* teaches meditation through Buddha’s teachings and the sacred text the ‘Anapanasati Sutra’. It relays the necessary instructions to begin meditating and gradually we are guided to a deeper understanding of meditation and the universe around us. It is a lifetime commitment as we grow and evolve breath by breath and our thinking is transformed and refined, as well as our hearts and our life. In this book, he explains how the Anapanasati Sutra is divided into 16 contemplations and then further stacked in four sets of four contemplation. The first set gives instructions on conscious breathing. The second set of contemplation focuses on our emotional state. The third concentrates on our mental state, and the last set focuses on the impermanence of things and letting go and finally reach a state of enlightenment.

Another fountain of knowledge is from Roy Eugene Davis, *“A Master Guide to Meditation and Spiritual Growth”*, and his *“Easy Guide to Meditation”*. Both books are beautifully written and explain the various dimensions of Meditation beautifully. The true purpose of why people meditate is discussed at length. Roy Eugene Davis is a well-known Spiritual Teacher and studied under Paramahansa Yogananda in 1949. He was ordained by him in 1949, and as Minister, he joined The Self-Realization Fellowship Center in Phoenix, Arizona teaching Kriya Yoga. In 1972 he opened a Spiritual Awareness Center in Georgia. He has written many books on spirituality and meditation. Along with that, he has published many articles in the Truth Journal Magazine. The book *“A Master Guide to Meditation”*, his guide on the growth of consciousness and spirituality. The goal of the book is to remember our divine nature and connection with the Infinite (God), and that we reside in God always. Through Meditation one can connect to God and thus divine consciousness, which brings us to a deeper inner satisfaction and spiritual growth.

*“An Easy Guide to Meditation”*, by Roy Eugene Davis is a beginner level book and explains concepts of how meditation can help attain spiritual growth in its various stages. He says in the book, *“You need to know you are a spiritual*

*being so that you can do helpful things to allow your innate qualities to unfold and express.” He goes on to explain that deep within our core we are units of divine consciousness and this fact can help us transform our lives to make better choices and decisions. Another amazing resource is by Lawrence Leshan called, “A Guide to Self-Discovery: How to Meditate”. Lawrence Leshan talks about why people meditate and how to explore the different ways to meditate. He goes on to explain how meditation is the journey of meditation and spiritual growth, which helps us evolve as humans. He further states that cultures and traditions from around the world have shown common outcomes of improved functionalities and a better understanding of one’s reality. Lawrence Leshan was a psychotherapist and a meditation expert. He has a Ph.D. in Human Development and has done extensive research work in parapsychology and the paranormal. Along with that, he has written many articles and books on meditation, mysticism, and paranormal concepts.*

*Another amazing book is by Starhawk, “The Spiral Dance: A Rebirth of the Ancient Religion of the Goddess”. Starhawk holds a BA in Fine Arts and a Masters in Psychology. She is an ecofeminist, a witch, and active in the Neopagan belief system. Her book, “The Spiral Dance” talks about the Wiccan and Goddess religion, and how the male and female energies keep the world and creation in balance. She talks about how the divine consciousness is within us and is the source of our most sacred wisdom and creative expression. In the book “The Spiral Dance” Starhawk says that, “The Deep Self is the Divine within, the ultimate essence, the spirit that exists beyond time, space and matter. It is our deepest level of wisdom and compassion and is conceived of as both male and female, two motes of consciousness united. It is often symbolized as two linked spirals, or as the infinity sign, the 8 on its side.” Starhawk gives detailed meditation practices, with chants and visualizations that help one to connect to divine consciousness.*

*Another book that truly inspired me is “The Power of Breath: The Art of Breathing Well for Harmony, Happiness and Health”, by Swami Saradananda. Swami Saradananda was born in a Brahmin family and was a deeply religious man. He loved to help the poor, sick, and destitute. He became spiritual and studied under Ramakrishna and became his disciple in spiritual practices. He wrote many articles and joined the Ramakrishna Mission. In his book “The Power of Breath” he explains the breathing process and its science. He says that breath is in everything we do, breath is in our thoughts, our emotions, and every action. Our bodily functions thrive on breath. Swami Saradananda instructs on various*

*breathing exercises to rejuvenate our body, mental and emotional being, and to utilize the breath energy more efficiently.*

*Another great resource is written by Dr. Joseph Murphy's "Believe in Yourself". His book teaches how we can all connect to our divinity within and become whole and reclaim our power back. It talks about using imagination (visualization) to create a better life for ourselves. Dr. Joseph Murphy further explains in his book that "God's presence and power is within you. This knowledge or Awareness of Divinity within you is the greatest and most powerful contributing factor to success." Dr. Joseph Murphy was a scholar of Divine Sciences, a poet, and a mystic. He became a Minister and helped the New Thought Movement. This movement was established by a group of people who believed that our everyday life could be improved by what we believe and imagine it to be. They taught a new way to look at life, which found their source from metaphysical, religious, and spiritual concepts. Dr. Joseph Murphy also started his own Ministry and named it "The Church of Divine Science".*

*Another great book is Mindfulness Meditation Guide for Beginners: How to Relieve Stress through Meditation and Cultivate Ultimate Wellness for Life", by Tencia Revona. This book is a simple guide to Mindfulness Meditation. Tencia Revona explains how mindfulness in meditation gives you wisdom that gives you peace in every thought and action. You become one with that moment. In our fast-paced life mindfulness meditation gives us a chance to slow down and become aware of ourselves and what we are doing. This way we can be at peace and with an inner knowing see things differently. It helps reduce anxiety and stress and live-in awareness. Tencia Revona says in the book, "...mindfulness is all about and choosing to be present in their lives rather than simply letting life pass them by." Tencia Revona is a spiritual teacher, healer, and writer.*

*Another resource that I found inspiring is: The Yoga of Breath: A Step-by-Step Guide to Pranayama" by Richard Rosen, who is a teacher of Iyengar Yoga and is the Assistant Director of the Yoga Research and Education Center in California. He is also editor of the Yoga Journal. In the book "The Yoga of Breath" Richard talks about his experience in pranayama and how it has transformed his life for the better. Pranayama exercises have enabled him to see visions and a deeper wisdom and understanding of life. He goes on to explain that he has divided pranayama science into four parts, and each part brings a different experience and fulfillment. He reveals yoga as a limitless potential of spirituality.*

## **Personal Relevance**

*Personally, I have been doing some meditation to calm the senses and to rejuvenate the body. The following is a breathing method that I found beneficial for releasing emotional & mental thoughts and detoxification.*

- *Sit in the lotus position or lie straight in a comfortable position.*
- *Begin by taking a few deep breaths.*
- *Now inhale by breathing in from the abdomen and count to four breaths and,*
- *Hold for sixteen counts (multiply by four the number of breaths taken).*
- *Then slowly let out your breath in eight counts (half the held breaths and double the number of breaths taken).*
- *Repeat five times.*
- *Increase or decrease as desired.*

*I found that even 10 minutes of this meditation three times per week is beneficial for overall health. It can be enhanced by holding of crystals such amethyst and rose quartz, or only plain quartz crystal. Another meditation that I have used is with visualization of white light. The best way to protect yourself from negative energy is with a light meditation. The following is one technique to do a simple meditation.*

### ***White Light Meditation.***

- *Sit, or lay on the floor and close your eyes.*
- *Imagine white light warming and engulfing first, the Crown of your head, and bathing your eyes in light. Let the white light warm your mind and relax and release all thoughts.*
- *Move the white light down and around the body and let each part be filled with white light.*
- *Allow the white light to massage each part of your body and around it like a halo.*



- *Finish at the root chakra but let the white light move down your legs and feet.*
- *Then allow the white light to engulf your entire being.*
- *This protects your aura from negative energies and allows your “psychic defense” to come into play.*

*This meditation technique can be used with crystals also, especial quartz crystal to enhance overall health and to increase positive energy.*

## ***History of Meditation***

*All cultures and religions have been practicing meditation for centuries. Connecting with the Divine God, a Higher Power, the Great Spirit, etc., has been an important part of humanity’s beginnings and evolution. Every culture religion and civilization has practiced meditation in its many forms. They have used meditation to attain a serene state and connect to nature and God. It is every human’s innate desire to get away from everyday problems and workings of our fast-paced life. Extensive research has shown that meditation was first found in the Eastern Worlds, such as the Indian sub-continent. The Vedas is found to have numerous accounts of meditations to bring awareness to God. Later, knowledge of other spiritual practices such as yoga was discovered. China and Japan brought forth various new ways of connecting to God, from these teachings stemmed from the various Buddhist branches of spiritual practices that put much emphasis on meditation as the key to divine consciousness.*

*The website [www.project-meditation.org/mankinds-oldest-getaway/](http://www.project-meditation.org/mankinds-oldest-getaway/) states that,*

*“The ancient Vedas of India were the first to document meditation, about 1,500 BCE. At the same time, other forms of meditation developed in China, and only slightly later, in Japan. Meditation gained ground as a Buddhist spiritual practice between 500-600 BCE, with the first meditation hall*

opening in Japan in 653 BCE. The Bhagavad Gita, an epic poem that describes the philosophy of yoga, meditation, and spirituality, was written around 400 BCE. By 20BCE, spiritual exercises involving mindfulness had spread to the west and were documented in early Greek Texts, but the practice was not embraced by early Christianity although prayer and meditation share remarkable similarities. Throughout most of history, though, meditation was considered a spiritual practice that was the realm of monks, priests, other religious figures, and a few intellectuals, and was largely? unknown among the general population.”

In antiquity, meditation was practiced by only those who chose to follow a certain, strict, hermetic way of life. These few select people would devote themselves to God, following a spiritual, religious way of life, and at the same time denying themselves the materialistic luxuries, to become one with God. They were known as mystics, enlightened beings, awakened, Sufis, Buddhists, etc.

Eventually, as time went by, the world grew, and its’ knowledge spread. With the advancement of technology, meditation became more widespread. In the advent of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, meditation began to be practiced across nations. By the mid-20<sup>th</sup>-century various meditation techniques began to surface in the western part of the world. These meditations focused on relaxation and self-transformation by attaining inner calm. The website [www.project-meditation.org/mankinds-oldest-getaway/states](http://www.project-meditation.org/mankinds-oldest-getaway/states) that,

“In the west meditation has always been a largely secular practice. Its modern emphasis is primarily on self-improvement, and self-reduction-but it still did not gain widespread popularity until the 1990s, when Deepak Chopra became a household name among those interested in personal development. Jon Kabat-Zinn, founded the Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction Program at the University of Massachusetts in 1979 to help treat patients with chronic illnesses-and since then, Meditation has been widely studied and increasingly applied for its therapeutic effects. “

All meditation has their source in religious or spiritual concepts that initiates the

*development of the personality and character, which further develops the soul. This practice leads to the expansion of consciousness and mind, which aids in getting spiritual truths. Prayers, contemplations, divine readings, and devotional worship all lead to connection with the divine.*

*Researchers in meditation have found that meditation was practiced in ancient civilizations, one common practice was found in the form of reciting chants in a repetitive, rhythmic way. The repetitive chants put focus on reciting one thing, which assists in freeing the mind from the constant chatter and thus enabling it to stillness, where union with the divine is made possible.*

### **What is Meditation**

*Meditation comes from the Latin word meditatum, which means to contemplate, think on. Many philosophers and thinkers, throughout history, termed meditation as a spiritual practice, or an exercise to control the mind and psyche. The goal of meditation is to find our true self in connection with divine consciousness and with everything around us. Lawrence Le Shan states in his book, "How to Meditate: A Guide to Self-Discovery" that,*

*"We meditate to find, to recover to come back to something of ourselves we once dimly and unknowingly had and have lost without knowing what it was or where or when we lost it."*

*We all strive to better ourselves, to live life to our fullest potential, and to find peace and satisfaction in whatever we do. Meditation leads to an awakened spiritual state. It is a spiritual exercise to control the mind and psyche for gaining a serene state. By being calm and peaceful and confident we can connect with our divine self, universal consciousness, and live life with creative expression. The true purpose of meditation is to 'Know Thyself' and what it means to be*

*alive in a physical form and at the same time being connected to our spirituality and soul. This is a journey to discover what it means to be a human being. But this journey of self-discovery and self-transformation only begins when one is ready. Jon Kabat-Zinn states in his book "Wherever You Go, There You Are: Mindfulness Meditation in Everyday Life", that,*

*"Many paths can lead to understanding and wisdom. Each of us has different needs to address and*

*things worth pursuing over the course of a lifetime. Each of us must chart our own course, and it has to fit what we are ready for meditation. You have to come to it at the right time in your life, at a point where you are ready to listen carefully to your own voice, to your own heart, to your own breathing-to just be present for them and with them, without having to go anywhere or make anything better or different."*

*We meditate to realize our connection with God, Divine Consciousness, whatever we choose to call it. God is divine consciousness, and his consciousness is limitless and infinite, connecting to this consciousness brings us to our higher self and inspires us to live with the highest potential of our being and divinity. Our souls long to discover our higher and truest potential and this can be done by the process of meditation, which connects with divine consciousness. Implementing a process of meditation in our lives we begin, to experience different levels of spiritual growth, which help us to evolve as humans also. Roy Eugene Davis talks about the different dimensions that unfold as we meditate. In his book, "Master Guide to Meditation", he states that,*

*"These guidelines are emphasized in the major religious and philosophical writings of many cultures.*

*These are six stages through which we unfold during meditation practice, which may be experiencing sequentially or may be moved through almost instantaneously: Settled meditation posture, harmonizing of the body's life forces, internalization of attention, concentration, pure meditation, and the peak experience or realization. To facilitate meditation practice, these stages should be understood and knowledge of how to move through them should be acquired and applied."*

*The growth of humans has no end in sight, it is limitless as we evolve to perfect our lower qualities to higher, more perfected qualities that lead us to live in unity with divine consciousness as creative expressions of that consciousness. We then can live more abundant, fulfilled, and joyous life. At the same time, we can create peace on earth, enjoy better relationships within the community and in our daily lives.*

### **Breath: An Integral Part of Meditation**

*“The breath is a gateway into the present moment...” Larry Rosenberg, “Breath by Breath: The Liberating Practice of Insight Meditation”*

*The first thing that we become aware of when we sit in silence is our breath. By the process of becoming aware of our breath, we can begin to awaken to our spirituality and divine consciousness. One way in which the science of breath can be explained is by the ancient practice of Pranayama. Pranayama is formed from two words. Prana means the breath, life force and ayama means to control. Together it creates the process of controlling the life force (breath) which is pranayama. This practice is said to revitalize the chi/vital life force and energies of the body, bringing health and wellness and awareness to the self.*

*The breath is an integral part of our physical body, in fact it is our life force, without which we would not be alive. Breath is the essence of your being. It is the force that brings one to life. It is also, an essential part of one's being, giving life and movement to every part, organ, and function in our bodies.*

### **What is Breath**

*Breath consists of oxygen, a vital element that enables one to live and to be alive. The oxygen*

*mixes with our blood and cells to give us life, which flows through our bloodstream. Our physical bodies are constantly changing, as we breathe in the new air every second of our life. The breath (air) also consists of nitrogen and carbon dioxide. We breathe these elements in, but they are mainly used in the exhalation process. Nitrogen helps in the making of proteins and amino acids, whereas carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) is breathed out. Oxygen is the pure air we breathe in carbon dioxide is the stale, harmful air we breathe out. Swami Saradananda states in his book, "The Power of Breath: Yoga Breathing for Inner Balance, Health and Harmony", that,*

*"Yoga philosophy teaches that your breath is the physical manifestation of the vital energy that gives you the ability to live and breathe, move about and function in the world. It is this life force that allows you to think, digest food, hear sounds, laugh, sneeze, and carry out the numerous activities you engage in at any moment, both conscious and unconsciously. This vital energy, which animates every being, is described in many eastern philosophies, and in India is known as Prana. Though not material in nature, prana flows through every part of your body, interpenetrating each cell like water filling a sponge."*

*The breath is a part of our every feeling, action, and thought. Whatever, we do our breath is a part of it. If we breathe the right way, we improve the way we think, feel, and react to situations and others. On the other hand, if we breathe improperly, we gradually begin to become stressed, which affects our emotions, thoughts, and actions, and eventually, this leads to mental and physical diseases.*

*The process of breathing includes breathing-in (Inhale) and breathing-out (Exhale). This process takes place in our body, in the place called the respiratory system. This system includes us lungs in the chest area, the throat, and the nose area. Everything between the nose and the lungs are the respiratory system. This system allows the breathing process to take place. We inhale through the nose, and the nasal passage allows the vital breath to flow down passing through the*

throat area, then down to the heart and lungs. By inhaling air, we bring oxygen to become a part of the respiratory system which then spreads to our bodies by the bloodstreams and subtle energy systems.

With every inhalation, an exhalation takes place, which brings out the stale, harmful breath out of the body. This process enables the physical body to manage its waste and rids the body of toxins and waste substances.

By concentrating on the breath, the prana, life force energy one can enhance the quality of their physical body and life. This can be done by performing breathing techniques one can begin to connect with breath (Prana), which gradually begins to connect with divine consciousness. Which in turn releases divine expression and creativity. The pure breath that emanates from your connection with the divine begins to animate your whole being. Breath in its balanced form becomes Prana, Chi, Ki, life force etc. The subtle energy force that gives life to every cell in your body.

Swami Saradananda states in his book, "The Power of Breath: Yoga Breathing for Inner Balance, Health and Harmony", that,

"Prana flows through your body in subtle-energy channels called nadis. Approximately 72,000 criss-cross your body-you might like to think of them as roads on an energy highway system. The traffic on the roads in your prana. When traffic flows freely the system works well, but if a nadi becomes blocked, the flow of prana to that region of the body is reduced or even cut off. Without the nourishment of vital energy, that part of the body may weaken or become sick. For your body to be vibrantly healthy, an unimpeded flow of prana is necessary. One way to encourage this is to practice breathing exercises."

To control the breath (prana) is to achieve a meditative state of being. This is usually done by developing and controlling the breath. Many systems of breath techniques have been created from different cultures and traditions, to create a perfect state of being. One such breathing exercise is

*Pranayama, which focuses on various breathing exercises to achieve connection with the higher self and divine consciousness.*

*The best meditation technique is usually achieved through controlling the breath. One can achieve a still mind, a relaxed body by controlling the breath which leads to the opening of your spiritual self and divine consciousness. Achieving a still mind is the hardest thing to do. But it can be done given time and practice. As we progress in our meditation practice our thoughts become clearer, our emotions become balanced, and the inner world becomes more at peace with itself, which eventually affects all our body's systems, and brings health and well-being to our physical self. Roy Eugene Davis states in his book "A Master Guide to Meditation and Spiritual Growth," that,*

*"As meditation progresses, breathing becomes slower and more refined, and tranquil calm becomes the prevailing mental condition providing the meditator deeper conscious rest and renewal than usually occurs during ordinary sleep. The body's life forces become balanced, contributing to organized function of physical systems."*

*One can achieve a still mind, a relaxed body, and altered states of consciousness, by the development and control of breath. The breath process is where the key to meditation lies. The place between inhalation & exhalation is the place where one finds the peace to connect with God.*

### ***Meditation around the World***

*"And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul." Genesis 2:7*

*The practice of meditation can be found all over the world, in one form or another. The following are some common practices that have had a profound effect on defining what meditation is:*



## **Tibetan Meditation**

*The Tibetans practice Buddhism to attain the advanced states of awareness. In them meditations mandala symbolism, visualizations, mind-cultivating exercises, reading and chanting of esoteric poetry to become one with the divine. They also advance their training through tantric meditation to gain siddhis' abilities. These abilities go beyond human nature that gives increased senses such as extrasensory perceptions, visions, telepathic abilities, clairvoyant, clairaudient, etc. Tibetan meditation follows the Mahaayana Buddhism which emphasizes the controlling of the mind. The Website [http://info-buddhism.com/Tibetan\\_Buddhism-The\\_Union\\_of\\_Three\\_Vehicles\\_Georgios\\_Hakias.html](http://info-buddhism.com/Tibetan_Buddhism-The_Union_of_Three_Vehicles_Georgios_Hakias.html), in the article "Buddhist Mediation Traditions in Tibet: The Union of Three Vehicles" by Georgios T. Halkias states that,*

*"Mahayana, not unlike Southern Buddhism, attaches vital importance to disciplining one's mind, stressing both the cultivation of great compassion for all suffering sentient beings and the view of the inherent emptiness of all phenomena. The primary motivation of Mahayanist is devoting, without self-gain, their life to liberate all living beings from the bondage of Samsara, the mind's compulsive grasping at a supposed inherent self and an equally rigid external reality. The altruistic commitment takes the form of a series of vows as outlined in the Bodhicaryavatara (Engaging in the Bodhisattva's Way) ...."*

*The initiate of Mahayana Buddhism works toward perfecting and purifying the mind, body, and soul. They work at perfecting their character by increasing their wisdom, by showing compassion for all beings, by doing good, by acceptance of all that is, by meditating and trying in life, and by realizing that everything is dependent on each other by connecting to the oneness of the universe. By practicing these six perfections the initiate learns to become aware of the aspects of an awakened spiritual consciousness.*

## **Chinese Meditation**

*"To blow out and breathe in slowly, to inhale and exhale, to puff out the old breaths and draw in the new, practicing bear-hanging and bird-stretching, longevity is the only concern. Guiding and pulling, cultivating and nourishing the body favored by those who wish to live long. (Zhuangzi, Gua535)*

*The Chinese practice several types of meditation techniques. The most common are to sit in silence, meditate on the Tao to become enlightened and attain a divine state of consciousness. The Chinese Mystics initially followed a Buddhist way of life and by following their teachings they eventually adapted it, into their way. One such practice is Silent Illumination which focuses on becoming aware of the silence and the moment, which brings light to the being. The main concept of silent illumination is to silence the mind and let the divine consciousness guide you to lead a creative, more abundant, and joyful life.*

*Chinese meditation teaches one to concentrate and if you are unable to sit in meditation then moving meditation is recommended to achieve similar states, such as qigong and tai chi. The website [www.spaceandmotion.com/health/chu-kung-gigong.htm](http://www.spaceandmotion.com/health/chu-kung-gigong.htm) states that, "The practice of this "moving meditation" will enhance the mind/body connection and allow one to have more of a connection with the internal body. Qigong and Tai Chi are exercises as well as meditations. You will move every muscle, joint, bone, and organ of the body but in a slow and methodical way. Breathing techniques will enhance your practice. The exercises specifically for the joints will help you maintain your flexibility and regain some of the lost flexibility. This is a very gentle program and therefore is perfect for rehabilitation. This moving meditation will not only help you to focus and concentrate, but also to build the feeling of peace and harmony."*

*Qigong and Tai Chi are moving meditations to heal the physical, mental and*

*spiritual aspects of one are being. Qigong uses the subtle energy force in our bodies to meditate. The rhythmic movements of qigong help release energy blockages, the qi (chi) energy is then free to move in its natural state. These movements eventually bring one to connect with divine consciousness so that we move and live with the higher consciousness.*

### ***Japanese Meditations***

*The Japanese practice meditation in the form of Zen or Zazen, which is meant to be seated in a relaxing position and emptying the mind of all thoughts and images and letting the pureness of divine consciousness pours into the empty mind. By this practice, one can attain inner calm, peace, and serenity. When our inner world is at peace, we can reflect divine consciousness into the outer world, which enables us to live a better more creative, and abundant.*

*Joseph Murphy says in his e-book "Believe in Yourself", that,*

*"...Your conscious and subconscious mind are projections of God; they are working tools. God is infinite wisdom, Boundless Love, Infinite Intelligence, Absolute Bliss, eternal Harmony, and Indescribable Beauty. All these and others are qualities and attributes of God. You are not cast adrift on the ocean of life deserted by the Creator of Life. This presence and power are within you. This knowledge or awareness of divinity within you is the greatest and most powerful contributing factor to success."*

*There are many different styles of Zen Meditation, which are taught and practiced in traditional schools. Zazen meditations, put focus on sitting comfortably with a good posture. Sometimes they sit in groups on cushions. Group meditation is usually practiced in temples or monasteries and includes both sitting meditations along with walking meditation. There are several*

*sitting postures that help one to attain a meditative state, the most common is the lotus position, along with the Burmese position which is a cross-legged posture and another position common in Zen*

*Meditation is the kneeling position on a cushion which is called a seiza.*

*Once position and seating posture is established the meditation process starts. This includes*

*focusing on the breath to still the mind and to begin concentrating on one thing. Once this is achieved then a complicated symbol which is called a koan is given to the meditator to focus on. A Koan is described in the dictionary from the website, [www.dictionary.com](http://www.dictionary.com) as the following.*

*“A nonsensical or paradoxical question to a student for which an answer is demanded, the stress of meditation on the question often being illuminating.” Or “(in Zen Buddhism) a problem or riddle that admits no logical solution.” Or “Zen Paradox, 1976, from Japanese ko, “public” and “mate for thought” “*

*Koan is thus a symbol or riddle that wants us to go beyond our rational mind thinking. This*

*stimulates the reality beyond our everyday reality, it stimulates our mind to look towards achieving*

*nirvana, opening to divine consciousness. Some Zen Buddhism schools do not use Koans, instead they just sit and practice non-thinking which leads to stillness of mind and thus enlightenment.*

*Another important Zen Buddhism is Walking Mindfulness Meditation. Mindfulness*

*meditation is another great meditation style to incorporate into your daily life. Thich Nhat Hanh, a*

*Vietnamese Buddhist monk and Zen Masters popularized walking meditation as a form of mind*

*mindfulness meditation. It is like the meditation the Christian Monks used, as they performed*

*their daily tasks. While walking practice conscious breathing by counting your steps. Mindfulness*

*Meditation can be practiced with any activity, having one-pointed attention on walking, cooking, or*

*gardening. Staying fully present in whatever you do is the important aspect of this meditation practice. The goal of mindfulness meditation is to find joys in one's own life and to develop love and*

*compassion for all forms of life. Thich Nhat Hanh reminds us that the kingdom of God is within us,*

*but we must be ready to welcome it.*

*Mindfulness is being aware of the moment you are in and the actions you are doing at that moment. Larry Rosenberg states in his book, "Breath by Breath: The Liberating Practice of Insight Meditation",*

*"Mindfulness is often likened to a mirror; it simply reflects what is there. It is not a process of thinking, it is pre-conceptual, before thought. One can be mindful of thought. There is all the difference in the world between thinking and knowing that thought is happening, as thoughts chase each other through the mind and the process is mirrored back to us. The only time that mindfulness can happen is in the present moment; If you are thinking of the past, that is memory. It is possible to be mindful of memory, of course, but such mindfulness is unbiased. It is not for or against anything, just like a mirror, which does not judge what it reflects. Mindfulness has no goal other than the seeing itself. It doesn't try to add to what's happening or subtract from it, to improve it in any way."*

*Mindfulness has become an important part of healing our lives and mind, as a holistic healing and wellness concept. Many researchers of mindfulness are discovering that every part of our life can be improved and transformed through the practice of mindfulness.*

### **Hindu Meditation**

*"To change the analogy, the mind is like a lake, and stones that are dropped into it (or winds) raise waves. Those waves do not let us see who we are. (...) The waters must be calmed. If one remains quiet, eventually the winds that ruffle the water will give up, and then one knows who one is God is constantly within us, but the mind obscures that fact with agitated waves of worldly desires. Meditation quiets those waves. (Bhagavad Gita V.28) Huston Smith, Foreword, The Bhagavad Gita,*

*The Hindus practice meditation through yoga, reciting mantras and through breathing exercises called Pranayama. Meditation is a part of their religious and spiritual studies and various meditation practices are mentioned in the ancient Vedas Scriptures and the Upanishads.*

*“Vedic teachings hold that since the universal divine self-dwells within the heart, the way to experience and recognize divinity are to turn one’s attention inward in a process of contemplative meditation.” William Mahoney, The Artful Universe: An Introduction to the Vedic Religious Imagination.*

*Dhyana is another ancient Indian practice for deep contemplation that leads to enlightenment and mergence with God Essence. Yet another way that the Hindus practice meditation is by Yoga. The practice of yoga means to unite our inner and outer to attain a divine state. Yoga is also a moving meditation and is performed in combination with physical postures and breathing techniques. This creates a state of focusing and concentration on each movement and pose leading to the awakening of the higher faculties and consciousness. The Creator of the Yoga System is Patanjali. This system is focused on silencing the mind and emotions and attaining nirvana. Yoga is based on eight branches that work towards uniting our spiritual (inner) and physical (outer) being. The following are the eight branches of yoga that help one reach divine consciousness and attain a peaceful, relaxed psyche.*

- Yama-Is the branch that develops our social interaction with others in society, such as practicing do no harm, will not lie or steal, control of sexual lust. Perfecting our lower desires creates improved morals, values, and behaviors, thus peace and harmony in a society.*
- Niyama-Is the branch that works on the development of the self by practicing compassion, devotion, contemplation on one’s behavior, and staying in a state of cleanliness and purity of both mind and body.*
- Asana-Means to practice physical poses that create a flexible, physical body with a peaceful mental state. These postures improve the flow of energy in our body creating a better physical condition with fewer diseases.*
- Pranayama-Means to practice the science of controlling the breath and breathing process. When we breathe right with a good posture, we release energy blockages, which hinder our natural state. This in turn brings one to a calm, serene mind and thus body.*

- *Pratyahara- Is the branch of controlling the senses.*
- *Dharana-Is the aspect of yoga that brings focus and concentration on one object or thing to overcome the chatter of the mind.*
- *Dhyana-This branch of yoga is a continuation of Dharana in its developed form. When concentration is developed it leads to joining with the higher self & divine consciousness.*
- *Samadhi-is the final aspect of yoga that brings one to final enlightenment.*

### **Zoroastrian Meditation**

*The Zoroastrian similarly pray to God as the Muslims and somewhat to the Jews. They pray to praise God through their daily prayers, which are known as Gah. This is how they connect themselves to the divine consciousness. The prayers are said in poetic prose.*

*The spiritual side of meditation in Zoroastrianism is practiced through the concept of purifying the Aipi (the aura or energy field of the physical body). The website [www.frashogard.com/an-introduction-to-zoroastrian-yoga-part-1/](http://www.frashogard.com/an-introduction-to-zoroastrian-yoga-part-1/) states in the article "An Introduction to Zoroastrian Yoga-Part 1", that*

*"...the expanding of Dum was intricately linked to the state of the Aipi of a person. As we have seen earlier, a person's body is composed of nine-parts-three physical, three ultra-physical parts of the body-called Keherp, Ushtan, and Tevishi extend outside the physical core body by a few inches. These are also collectively called the Aipi-the subtle atmosphere around an individual. The area of the Aipi extends from the physical body to the circular expanse covered when a person stands with his*

*arms on his hips. This Aipi, although invisible to us, can be very easily seen and read by advanced souls, including some Tibetan lamas who can effortlessly tell you how you have spent the last 24 hours. How is this possible? Khshnoom explains that each one of our innermost thoughts, words, and deeds are captured and remain as a record of our past deed."*

*Further in the same article, it states*

*“Meanwhile the imprint in our Aipi also gathers. Depending on our lifestyle, the Aipi can be heavily polluted with the imprints of our evil thoughts, words, and deeds, or can be radiant with our good thoughts, words, and deeds.”*

*Therefore, spirituality and meditation are done to purify the Chakra system, thus the Aipi (Aura) to create beautiful, light energy thoughts which illuminate the body and let's divine consciousness shine through.*

*Zoroastrians also use mantras, reciting holy words to attain a serene state of being. The Five prayers of the day give respite throughout the day to get some peace of mind from our daily struggles and problems.*

### **Christian Meditation**

*“The proper atmosphere of meditation is one of tranquility and peace and balance. The mind should be able to give itself to simple and peaceful reflection. Intellectual brilliance is never required. The will should find itself directed toward the good and strengthened in its desire for union with God.”*

*Thomas Merton, Spiritual Direction & Meditation.*

*In Christianity meditation is practiced in many ways and one common method is using the rosary. They use repetitive ‘Hail Mary’s’, the Lord’s Prayer, and other holy words from scripture to create a still mind. Along with repetitive chanting of holy words they use visualizations to attain inner peace. The Rosary was considered a symbol of devotion and salvation throughout the Christian history. This caused confraternities of the rosary to be formed starting in the mid-1400s and onwards. More so 100 years later a book called the “Meditations on the Rosary of the Glorious Virgin Mary” was put together by these confraternities to enhance the meditation process. Each bead would have a separate prayer or meditation associated with it, along with visualization of the images of Jesus and Mary and other devotional objects. All this would eventually lead to the reunion of our souls with God and the divine heavenly beings.*

*Another form of Christian meditation was developed by divine readings and teachings of the 5<sup>th</sup> -6<sup>th</sup> century Benedictine Monks, which took the form of Contemplative prayer. This form of prayer*



*leads to removing negative and harmful thinking patterns from the self, which creates space for God*

*Consciousness to reveal its presence within ourselves. Contemplative prayer is practiced by repeating*

*a sacred word or divine verse from the bible or a prayer for a minimum of 15 minutes a day. The*

*repetition of the sacred word, verse/phrase should be practiced with awareness and with devoted*

*concentration. This meditation is like Hesychasm which is contemplation prayer also known as*

*the prayer of Jesus.*

*To contemplate also means to cut oneself from their current situation. It is said that Saint John viewed meditation and to contemplate in silence as to become close to God. He called loving God like this is silent loving, which is to concentrate on loving God. The rosary is usually prayed in a special purified space, with objects and images from the Holy Scripture, the bible along with candles to create a sacred space of love and devotion to experience union with God.*

*Through prayer a deeper knowing of God emerges and leads to a more serene state of being,*

*eventually creating a connection with divine consciousness. One common prayer that is used by*

*Christian's is the Lord's Prayer. Each verse of the prayer is used to meditate upon to create space in*

*our hearts and mind for God's will to shine through. This creates a divine relationship with God.*

### ***Jewish Meditation***

*The Jewish people practiced several forms of meditation as well, which include meditating on the*

*Divine Names of God, Forms of Prayers, Visualization with prayers and they use the chanting of*

*God's sacred names through their Shema Meditation. The Jews refer to meditation by seclusion and*

*contemplation. They also practice seclusion to perform prayers and contemplation on divine names to experience, dveikus-which literally means cleaving to the divine, becoming one with God or close to God.*

*Another common meditative practice is the Kabbalah which is practiced in many different*

ways. The one that concerns this paper is the meditative Kabbalah. This form of the Kabbalah focuses on developing spirituality and the inner self.

The website [www.inner.org/kabbalah/beginner/five-stages-historical-development.php](http://www.inner.org/kabbalah/beginner/five-stages-historical-development.php), states that, "... Kabbalah represents the union of wisdom and prophecy in the collective Jewish soul; whenever we study Kabbalah, the inner wisdom of the Torah, we reveal this union." The article goes on to further explain that, Kabbalah makes the secret wisdom of the universal consciousness manifest in us. It is the divine consciousness that mirrors through our perfected self. The cosmic consciousness (divine consciousness) in the Kabbalah is revealed in five stages of wisdom. Each level is an unveiling of a concealed wisdom and corresponds to the refinement of the soul. When a certain refinement of the soul is reached, the next stage opens its way, gradually ascending to union with divine consciousness. Each level has its traditions and teachings and prayers along with a certain teacher or rabbi. Their teachings state that the Torah is unveiled for new teachings on each level. When one reaches the end of a level, the seeker begins to feel that the teachings of that level are a lie, that they do not apply to him/her anymore. This means this is the end of that stage/level of teachings. It is time to embrace a new set of teachings/guidance. Thus, the basic goal /purpose of the Kabbalah is the development and refinement of the soul to reveal divine consciousness within the self.

### **Native American Meditation**

In the Native American meditation, there are many ways to achieve a state where one can awaken to the divine consciousness. One such technique is drumming. When a few people gather together and their spiritual person such as the shaman performs a ritual with the beats of the drum. Listening and focusing on the drumbeats the shaman enters a trancelike state where the pure consciousness opens. In this state, they can heal, find creative solutions to their problems and questions etc.

Another method that is common in the Native American tradition is concentrating and becoming aware of the pause between breaths. By holding the breath and concentrating on the pause one can achieve a deep spiritual state, where we become one with divine consciousness.

*"The first peace, which is the most important. Is that which comes within the souls of people. When they realize their relationship. Their oneness, with the universe and all its power. And when they realize that at the center of the universe dwells. Wakan-Tanka (the Great Spirit). And that this center is everywhere, it is within each of us. This is the real peace, and the others are but reflections of this. The second peace is that which is made between two individuals, and the third is that which is made between two nations. But above all you should understand that there can never be peace between nations until there is known that true peace, which, as I have often said, is within the souls of me." -Black Elk, Oglala Sioux & Spiritual leader (1836-1950)*

*The Native Americans have connected with nature their environment, animals the earth etc. By connecting to everything in their environment, they have come to see the interconnectedness of all life, animate and inanimate with the Great Spirit. Other rituals that the Native Americans use are sweat lodges to purify themselves from unwanted negative energies, they also have vision quests to connect to divine consciousness by solitary staying in the mountains and connecting with the energy of the earth, mountains, and its serene surroundings.*

*Other similar cultures and traditions that live near nature such are the Africans and Australian aboriginals who have also been connecting with divine consciousness through their ritual and interaction with nature, plants, trees, the mountains, rivers, animals. Both the African and Australian tribes and cultures practice similar forms of spirituality to connect with divine consciousness.*

### **Islamic Meditation**

*The Muslims practiced meditation through their five prayers a day and other special prayers. Islamic Meditation comes in many forms such as prayers, reciting sacred names of God, and special prayers. Prophet Muhammad is said to have practiced meditation by going into seclusion for hours. He used to go to Mount Hira for Meditation.*

The website [www.techofheart.co/2007/10/prophet-muhammads-meditation.html](http://www.techofheart.co/2007/10/prophet-muhammads-meditation.html) states in the article 'Prophet Muhammad's Meditation', that,

*"It is known from historical accounts that before his prophetic illumination. The last Divine Messenger, Prophet Muhammad used to go to spiritual seclusions and extended retreats into Mount Hira near Mecca. It is during one of such meditation retreats (in the holy month of Ramadan) in a defining moment of extra-cosmic enlightenment. Divine revelations started to reveal to him. The well-preserved collection of such Divine revelations later came to be known as the Quran, which means recitation because of the Prophet following the inspirations, used to recite it to others including his companions."*

*The deep meditations of Prophet Muhammad led him to become one with God, Divine Consciousness and thus revelations from the divine were revealed. It is known that all holy prophets and messiahs practiced some form of meditation/prayer or contemplation in silence to attain higher wisdom and union with God (Divine Consciousness).*

*Prophet Muhammad is known to have traveled to Syria in his early years, where he met with Gnostics, and highly learned individuals who taught him different forms of meditations. The website [www.techofheart.co/2007/10/prophet-muhammads-meditation.html](http://www.techofheart.co/2007/10/prophet-muhammads-meditation.html) states in the article, 'Prophet Muhammad Meditation',*

*"...the methods of Prophet Muhammad's meditation, it is very much plausible to think that since he was practicing this prior to his divine inspiration – he might have been introduced to the idea of meditation at some point of time earlier. It is known from the life of the holy prophet that he used to travel to Syria in his young age. At that time Syria and that part of the world was the center of devout monks, mystics, kabbalists, sabians, gnostics-vibrating with fusion of different traditions."*

*"An hour of contemplation is of more value than seventy years of worship." Prophet Muhammad*

*Some Islamic mystics follow a spiritual path by practicing stages of spiritual meditations, which are as follows.*

- *Tasbih: Is a rosary or prayer beads that are used to recite the sacred names or sacred phrases of God repetitively to bring one's focus on one thing, thus connecting one to divine consciousness. The e-book "Islamic Meditation, Mastering the Art of Zikr", by Ihsan (Emil Torabi), [www.IslamicMeditatio.com](http://www.IslamicMeditatio.com) "With proper practice, Tasbih is one of the most powerful ways to enter a state of Divine Presence."*
- *Muraqaba: Is meditation that practices the art of silence by just relaxing and focusing on your breath. Let your thoughts be as they are, without attaching emotions and meaning to them overcome and transcends them.*
- *Taffakur: Is the practice of reflection and contemplation. To think with a positive attitude, which eliminates negative thoughts. By self-contemplation one can eliminate negativity caused by doubts, misunderstanding, and false belief systems.*

*Further in the e-book "Islamic Meditation, Mastering the Art of Zikr", by Ihsan (Emil Torabi), [www.IslamicMeditatio.com](http://www.IslamicMeditatio.com), it states that,*

*"Through this practice, one progressively transcends the self, the ego, and enters increasingly into a state of Divine Presence and peace. With Muraqaba, a higher state of consciousness begins to operate, one that is rooted in the heart rather than the mind. And with consistent practice, this deeper level of awareness beyond thinking, a state of consciousness based in knowing, begins to become the norm."*

*Other Islamic methods of meditations include the practice of Zikr. They also have a mystical sect called Sufism. The Sufis practice life through spiritual development, through mystical meditative techniques by meditating on moral stories, God's sacred names, and Zikr. Zikr Meditation is a form of cosmic circular movements to bring about a blissful state.*

## **Meditation Tools& Techniques**

*There are many ways to meditate, such as visualizations, chanting, mantras, music and the act and practice of simply praying with devotion and contemplation can bring one to inner peace and tranquility. The following are an explanation of some meditation tools and techniques:*

### **Visualization**

*Is the act of imagining. It is a tool of the mind to give direction to the mind and breath, to visualize a goal into being. We can imagine positive solutions to our problems. Visualization is used to change bad habits and belief systems that are hindering one from achieving their goal. Positive statements or affirmations along with mental imagery of changing a bad habit will assist to create positive change, by gradually adjusting the negative thinking pattern. Visualization is the process of creating an image of the thoughts you hold in your mind. So, you make an intention that I will run for 30 minutes today, you create a mental image first of yourself running with your full potential, with vigor and stamina. This will motivate you to run at your full potential because you saw yourself do, therefore you can do it.*

### **Chanting**

*Is the process of repeatedly saying a word, prayer, affirmation, or phrase. By continuously repeating a word or prayer calms the senses and silences the mind. Opening the way to experience divine consciousness. The constant repetition creates a profound, powerful sound that is soothing to the soul and sense and at the same focusing on one word or prayer, repeatedly creates a focused concentration on one thing, stilling the mind of its constant chatter. The process of chanting is also called dhikr (zikr) in Sufi traditions, and mantra chanting in the Eastern / Asian traditions. The website, [Willtuttle.com/wpmed.htm](http://Willtuttle.com/wpmed.htm) states that, "Meditation and affirmative prayer are ancient keys to wisdom, joy, abundance, love and freedom."*

*Repetitive chanting of sacred words, or phrases-repetitive chants put focus on reciting one thing which helps to free the mind from excessive negative thought patterns and related emotions. It gives some time off from the constant mind chattering, achieving a mind stillness. A quiet mind is then able to connect with the divine consciousness.*

## **Music**

*Listening to calming music can help in calming the mind, body, and soul to connecting with divine consciousness. Music affects one's emotions and psyche and can be used to enhance the meditative states of being. The website <http://www.zliving.com/wellness/meditation/meditation-music-7-reasons-listen-1685/>, In the article, "Meditation Music:7 reasons Why You Should Listen To It", by Z. Living Staff states that,*

*"Meditation music can be traced back to several ancient civilizations. In many indigenous cultures, shamans used meditation music in their worship of their gods or to put their followers in a trance-like state or religious ecstasy. Shamans and healers also use chants and hymns to perform their healing and magic. Christians used meditation music, in the form of praise songs and worship songs, to uplift the spirit. Monks in the holy temple can always be heard singing or chanting soothing hymns that create a peaceful and holy atmosphere in their temple. In medieval times, every celebration and feast were always accompanied by vibrant music and song playing. Meditation music has been used in the early days in so many ways and forms that people once believed that music was a form of magic."*

*Using music when meditating can greatly help create an inner serene state and a positive mindset. Healing sounds and healing sound frequencies or music enhance the experience of a meditative state. The vibrational frequencies are embedded with the music which leads one to experience higher states of beings. This helps one to experience higher dimensions of reality and awareness and eventually connect with the divine consciousness.*

## **Crystals**

*One can use crystals in their meditative practices to remove negativity to enhance the meditation and to attain a calm, peaceful state. For example, to heal stress one can use amethyst crystals sitting or lying in a circle of 6-7 crystals and holding one in the hand while visualizing the color of the crystal lighting up and enveloping you for 10-20 minutes in silence. If practiced daily it may able one to connect to divine consciousness and bring healing from that source to make you*

whole and well once again.

## **Aromatherapy**

Aromas can help create a peaceful and serene state to help get one in the mood of meditation. Incense sticks, sweet-smelling candles, and essential oils are found in many such places that meditation is practiced. Essential oils can also help release negative thinking patterns, stress, and depressive states of being. It also promotes relaxation. The website

<https://organicaromas.com/blogs/aromatherapy-and-essential-oils/using-essential-oils-during-meditation>,

“Essential oils can enhance the meditation experience, promote relaxation, and encourage spiritual openness. By using essential oils during meditation, you can get the clarity and peace of

mind that we all need in these hectic times. You can use essential oils in two different ways during

meditation. The first is by diffusing the oil into the air using an essential oil diffuser to promote

aromatherapy inhalation. The second is to make a potent aromatherapy massage oil and massage all over the body before the meditation exercise, aromatherapy inhalation can help stimulate the senses, promote relaxation and create an ambient space so you can really focus.”

A good essential oil and aroma that is used in meditation is lavender and chamomile. This oil calms the senses and promotes a peaceful state of being.

## **Benefits of Meditation**

Along with attaining spiritual growth, Meditation is beneficial in preventing and healing

many diseases and mental disorders, such as depression, attention deficit disorder (ADD), alcoholism, heart disease, hypertension, insomnia, ulcers. These conditions all have their roots in stress,

depression, and anxiety. The negative thoughts associated with stress and anxiety creates imbalance in our natural energetic states, which eventually leads to distortion of our natural energy (Chi), resulting in diseases.

The benefits of meditation are numerous, the following are a few:

- Rejuvenation
- Improved functionalities and senses



- *Youthful Appearance and aging processes are slowed.*
- *Vitality is increased*
- *Blood Pressure is lowered*
- *Decrease in heart diseases*
- *Nervous system is regenerated and brought into balance, stress, anxiety and fears reduced.*
- *Asthma is decreased as breathing is regulated.*
- *Immune System becomes stronger able to resist diseases*
- *One becomes more intellectual, endowed with wisdom and knowledge.*
- *Intuition is heightened*
- *Thoughts and emotions are more refined due to being calm and at peace with Oneself.*

*Through meditation, one can silence the mind which can help in eliminating negative thoughts and replacing them with positive ones to bring about transformation of the distortion of our natural energy (chi), and bring about a more creative, joyful state of being. After much research on the benefits of meditation and mindfulness, researchers have found that a mind that is not still, or aware of the present moment is not happy. Jon Kabat-Zinn says in his book, "Full Catastrophe Living: Using the Wisdom of Your Body and Mind to Face, Stress, Pain, and Illness", that,*

*"A recent headline in Science, one of the most prestigious and high-impact scientific journals in the world, read: "A Wandering Mind Is an Unhappy Mind.", Here is the first paragraph of that paper: Unlike other animals, human beings spend a lot of time thinking about what is not going on around them, and contemplating events that happened in the past, might happen in the future, or will never happen at all. Indeed, "stimulus-independent thought" or "mind wandering" appears to be the brain's default mode of operation. Although this ability is a remarkable evolutionary achievement that allows people to learn, reason, and plan, it may have an emotional cost. Many philosophical and religious traditions teach that happiness is to be found by living in the moment, and practitioners are trained to resist mind wandering and "to be here now." These traditions suggest that a wandering mind is an unhappy mind. Are they right? The Harvard researchers concluded, as the headline itself suggests, that indeed, those ancient traditions, which emphasize the power of the present moment and how to cultivate it, we're onto something."*

*Other mystics like Lawrence Le Shan talk about Meditation as a practice that needs to be done diligently and on a regular basis and that there is no end to the benefits that can be attained through meditation. In his book, "How to Meditate: A Guide to Self-Discovery", he states, that, "As in all serious matters-love, the appreciation of beauty, efficiency-there is no endpoint to the potential of human growth. We work - in meditation - as part of a process; we seek a goal knowing it is forever unattainable."*

*In a nutshell, the benefits of meditation are many and include both inner and outer benefits. By silencing the constant mind chatter and diffusing of high emotional states. We can live in joy, inner peace, and satisfaction. One can make better life choices and be able to make rational decisions. The outer follows our inner state. If the inner is peaceful our negativity, doubts, stress etc. are diminished, thus preventing diseases and health problems along with emotional mental disorders. This allows us to experience a better life.*

*In recent times meditation has become a universal practice and the main purpose being self-transformation and to create peace within oneself and thus peace in the outer world. Human growth never stops. The possibilities are endless. To perfect our lower qualities to higher, perfected qualities that lead on to live a life in unity with divine consciousness and as expressions of that consciousness is the goal of meditation. We then can live a more abundant, fulfilled, and joyous life.*

## **Discussion**

*The purpose of meditation is to connect with divine consciousness, God, or whatever you may choose to call it. The Spiritual Journey of meditation leads to human growth which is limitless as we evolve and grow towards perfection of the human condition. By attaining a calm, peaceful state, we can connect with our divine self and live with the unity of the cosmic consciousness. Our every action is a creative expression of God and we find satisfaction in whatever we do. Even in the most trying of circumstances, we make decisions and choices from the background of that peaceful state. This way we can find more joy and abundance in our lives. Therefore, in meditation, we find*

*our true self in connection with divine consciousness and with everything around us. Lawrence Le*

*Shan states in his book, "How to Meditate: A Guide to Self-Discovery", that,*

*"We meditate to find, to recover, to come back to something of ourselves we once dimly and unknowingly had and have lost without knowing what it was or where or when we lost it."*

*We all want a better lifestyle, to live to our fullest potential and with creative expression, to find peace and satisfaction in whatever we do. This type of state is best described as being spiritually awakened. Meditation is a spiritual exercise to control the mind and psyche for gaining a serene state. By being calm and peaceful and confident and at the same time connected to everything we can develop our lower self to improved intelligence and functionalities. This enables one to make better life choices and solve everyday problems in a rational, more intellectual way.*

*The breathing process can be thought of as a science. The inhalation and exhalation can be experimented on by trying the many different breathing techniques known to humanity. The science of breath enables the controlling of breath which controls the thoughts and emotional patterns of the psyche attached to the breath. By practicing certain breathing techniques, one can release toxic thoughts and emotions and gain peace of mind.*

*Meditation is practiced around the world, in various forms and techniques, depending upon the culture/religion/spiritual path one takes. Through the process of meditation, we can transform us lives, health, and well-being. Each culture and religion have its way of connecting with God. Each follows a spiritual practice coming from their religion, culture, or tradition and each is right. Many pathways are leading to divine consciousness.*

*The Tibetans practice meditative states through their lifestyles, by prayer by practicing love and compassion for all living beings. The Chinese follow the path of silence and contemplation on the Tao and ying / yang symbol and concepts. They also have moving meditate which are known as Qigong and Tai Chi. This type of meditative practices is good for people who are unable to sit still*

and focus. Whereas the Japanese practice of zazen or Zen by emptying the mind of all thoughts and letting divine consciousness enter the empty mind. Christians meditate by the reciting of sacred words, phrases on the rosary. Common words are Hail Mary's and Phrases from the Lord's Prayer. Another practice in Christianity is contemplative prayer to remove negative thinking patterns. To contemplate in silence to come near God. Jewish Meditation includes meditating on Divine names of sacred prayers and God. They also practice reunion with God through seclusion and contemplation. Another common spiritual practice the Jews follow the Kabbalah, which has many stages and focuses on the development of the inner self. The Hindus use many different styles of meditation to reunite with divine consciousness. They practice by reciting Mantras, practicing Mudras and yoga along with pranayama exercises. The Zoroastrians practice meditation by poetic praying and praising God by adoration. Zoroaster Spirituality is associated with purifying the subtle bodies, the energy fields by right thoughts and actions. This expands our consciousness and connects us with God. Islamic Meditation follows similar styles as Zoroastrianism. The Muslims meditate to remember God through their daily five prayers. They further have meditation practices as seclusion and contemplation on reciting the sacred names of God in repetitive chants. This reciting of sacred names is performed on a Tasbeih, which is a rosary or prayer beads and is considered a potent way to become connected with divine consciousness. Another way is by righteous acts and purifying the soul of its lower qualities. The Native Americans follow deep meditative practices such as dance rituals, vision quests, and Shamanic trances through smoke or herbs. As we see all such practices are performed to attain connection with God and attain a peaceful and harmonious state of being.

The process of meditation opens new doorways to our inner selves. Deep within us lies wisdom and knowledge in unlimited amounts. These are resources that need to be discovered in the form of wisdom and knowledge to overcome our limitations and problems. By becoming aware of who we are and connecting with divine consciousness we can see new potentials and insights? to human growth.

The article <http://chopra.com/articles/why-meditate>, in its article, states that,

"New research is also showing that meditation restores the brain. A landmark study conducted by Massachusetts General Hospital found that as little as eight weeks of meditation not only helped

*people feel calmer but also produced changes in various areas of the brain, including growth in the areas associated with memory, empathy, sense of self, and stress regulation."*

*Meditation and mindfulness are techniques used to heal many mental disorders such as stress, depression. It is considered medicine for the mind. By healing our mind and paying attention to our thoughts we can pass it down to our physical self thus we can live better lives. Vast amounts of research have been done on meditation and its effect on brain waves and how the different parts of the brain are affected. It was concluded by many researchers of this field that meditation had positive effects on reducing the parts of the brain that were associated with stress, depression, and various other mental and emotional disorders.*

*Jon Kabat-Zinn says in his book "Full Catastrophe Living: Using the Wisdom of Your Body and Mind to Face Stress, Pain, and Illness", that, "...We get pulled out of ourselves and wind-up losing sight of what is most important. We are apt to get so caught up in the urgency of everything we must do, and so caught up in our heads and in what we think is important, that it is easy to fall into a state of chronic tension, anxiety, and perpetual distraction that continually drives our lives and easily becomes our default mode of operating, our autopilot. Our stress is further compounded when we are faced with a serious medical condition, chronic pain, or a chronic disease, whether our own or that of a loved one. Mindfulness is now more relevant than ever as an effective and dependable counterbalance to strengthen our health and well-being, and perhaps our very sanity."*

*Mindfulness Meditation is now being used in many medical facilities and clinics to heal stress, and anxiety, and various other disorders and diseases. It has also been shown that our brain reduces the area where stress and anxiety take place, which in turn makes room for more inner joy, peace, and well-being.*

*There are many paths to enlightenment of divine consciousness. Meditation is the vehicle and we can use many types of vehicles to make the journey, such as moving, walking, stillness, and mindfulness meditation. Along with that, we can use various types of tools and techniques to enhance*

*the experience of meditation such as visualization, sounds, aromas, crystals along with the process of chanting of sacred words, phrases etc. Even the simple act of just praying in silence can bring peace to oneself.*

## **Conclusion**

*“Embrace the universe within! Greatness always begins from in the inside! All you need is within you! Find your heart and find your inner source of power! Here you will find your Truth. Here you will transform both light and shadow and liberate your Divine truth for the universe to celebrate!”*

Mercury      Veritas/Michael      Gamble  
[www.flowell.life](http://www.flowell.life)

*There are many ways to meditate. It can be done in simple stillness or movement like the Sufi Mystics, or through the rhythmic beat of the Native Americans. Whatever, method you choose to follow all have a similar goal. To connect with the universe around you and thus ultimately connecting with God, Divine Consciousness.*

*Meditation helps to still the mind from all external and internal influences. It lets the mind focus on a single point creating an expanded sense of awareness. It brings one to this serene state thus opening the doors to the wisdom of inner knowing, This peace in ourselves project into our outer world, into our daily life so we can create a better world around ourselves and live-in joy, peace, and harmony.*

*The act of meditation has been practiced since ancient times. Connecting with God, Divinity, the Cosmic Consciousness, has been the desire of almost every human. In antiquity, meditation was practiced by a select group of people who followed a strict hermetic way of life. Gradually as we moved forward and with the advancement of technology the wisdom of meditation moved towards the western part of the world and thus became widespread. The Practice and techniques of different meditations were used to attain enlightenment and altered states of consciousness.*

*A vital aspect of meditation is breath, which is also an integral part of our being, it gives every part of our being life. Every action, thought and feeling are embedded in breath. The science of breath can be explained by the ancient eastern practice of Pranayama, which means controlling the breath. By controlling the breath, which is the inhale and exhale process we can control our mind, psyche, emotional and physical body. This can improve our health and well-being. If one can experience a still mind and a serene, peaceful state of being which brings one to gradually connect to divine consciousness.*

*Every culture, religion, and civilization have practice meditation in its many forms. The Tibetans practice meditative states through their lifestyles, by prayer by practicing love and compassion for all living beings. The Chinese follow many ways of which one is Silent Illumination, which is sitting in silence. Whereas the Japanese practice Zen by emptying the mind. The Hindus, Christians, Muslims, and Jews use common practices such as repetitive chanting by reciting the sacred names of God, holy words or phrases, and development of the character and refining of the soul to attain connection with God (divine consciousness). The Native Americans follow deep meditative practices such as dance rituals, vision quests, and shamanic trances through nature, animals, and sacred symbols.*

*There are many techniques and tools used to enhance the meditation process. Some of the common ways are through visualizations, chanting, reciting mantra, listening to vibrational energy frequency sound or remarkably simple meditation music. Even the simple act of praying with true intent and devotion can lead to peace, relaxation, and inner satisfaction which allows one to enter divine consciousness.*

*There are many outer and inner benefits that can be experienced by meditating on a regular*

basis. Many diseases can be prevented such as heart disease, depression, asthma, blood pressure, hypertension, ulcers, attention deficit disorders, and many more. Along with that meditation can also heal insomnia, low energy levels, aging, stress, anxiety and bring rejuvenation and vitality to your overall physical form. One can never go wrong with meditation.

Our experiences in life are transformed from the mundane to the extraordinary when we use meditation to enhance our lives and beings. By becoming aware of the ocean of silence within, we connect to the divinity within us, thus to the cosmic consciousness. This awareness transforms us thoughts, and emotions to create our next moment into a more fulfilling and satisfying one, the quality of our life is then enhanced, along with better relationships with the people and world around us. Jon Kabat-Zinn says in his book, "Full Catastrophe Living: Using the Wisdom of Your Body and Mind to Face Stress, Pain, and Illness" that,

"...if we can sustain our awareness, it shapes the future and the quality of our lives and relationships, often in ways we simply cannot anticipate. The only way we have of influencing the future is to own the present, however, we find it. If we inhabit this moment with full awareness, the next moment will be vastly different because of our very presence in this one. Then we might find imaginative ways to fully live the life that is ours to live. Can we experience joy and satisfaction as well as suffering? What about being more at home in our own skin within the maelstrom? What about tasting ease of well-being, even genuine happiness? This is what is at stake here. This is the gift of the present moment, held in awareness, non-judgmentally, with a little kindness."

Whether the end goal of Meditation is attaining Enlightenment, or we just meditate to heal our souls or find peace within, we awaken our spiritual consciousness and begin living in awareness, which enables one to transform their life to the way they want. Our awakened spirituality eventually brings us back to connecting with divine consciousness and we can live with improved



functionalities, intelligence, and creative expression. The creative expression within brings us to make choices and decisions that lead to joy and abundance and an inner calm that comes with knowing ourselves and the universe we live in. Larry Rosenberg describes it best in his book *"Breath by Breath: The Liberating Practice of Insight Meditation"*, States that,

*"Finally, enlightenment is the experience of intimacy with the entire universe. There is no separation whatsoever. You disappear in the present moment. And because you do, you have never been more alive. A famous Tibetan master, Kalu Rinpoche, expressed this truth beautifully,*

*We live in illusion  
And the appearance of things  
There is a reality  
We are that reality.  
When you understand this  
You see that you are nothing  
And being nothing,  
You are everything.  
That is all."*

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***An Approach to Spiritual Growth Final Exam Questions***

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Student No. \_\_\_\_\_ -Phone No.

\_\_\_\_\_

- 1. The main objective of meditation is to bring about an awakened spiritual consciousness, enabling one to live with higher awareness and creative expression.*

*T*

*F*

2. *Inner calm and peace expand to the concept of knowing ourselves and the universe we live in. Coming close to God and knowing ourselves has been the secret desire of all humans.*  
T F
3. *All cultures and religions have been practicing meditation for centuries. Connecting with the Divine God, a Higher Power, the Great Spirit etc., has been an important part of humanity's beginnings and evolution.*  
T F
4. *Every culture religion and civilization did not practiced meditation in its many forms.*  
T F
5. *The ancient Vedas of India were the first to document meditation, about 1,500 BCE. At the same time, other forms of meditation developed in China, and only slightly later, in Japan. Meditation gained ground as a Buddhist spiritual practice between 500-600 BCE, with the first meditation hall opening in Japan in 653 BCE.*  
T F
6. *Breath consists of oxygen, a vital element that enables one to live and to be alive. The oxygen mixes with our blood and cells to give us life, which flows through our bloodstream. Our physical bodies are constantly changing, as we breathe in new air every second of our life.*  
T F
7. *The breath (air) also consists of nitrogen and carbon dioxide. We breathe these elements in, but they are mainly used in the exhalation process. Nitrogen helps in the making of proteins and amino acids, whereas carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) is breathed out. Oxygen is the pure air we breathe in carbon dioxide is the stale, harmful air we breathe out.*  
T F
8. *Tibetan meditation follows the Mahaayana Buddhism which emphasizes the controlling of the mind.*  
T F
9. *The primary motivation of Mahayanist is devoting, without self-gain, their life to liberate all living beings from the bondage of Samsara.*  
T F
10. *Qigong and Tai Chi are basically moving meditations to heal the physical, mental and spiritual aspects of one are being. Qigong use the subtle energy force in our bodies to meditate. The rhythmic movements of qigong help release energy blockages, the qi (chi) energy is then free to move in its natural state.*



*divine consciousness through their ritual and interaction with nature, plants, trees, the mountains, rivers, animals.*

T F

20. *The Muslims practiced meditation through their five prayers a day and other special prayers.*

*Islamic Meditation comes in many forms such as prayers, reciting sacred names of God and special prayers.*

T F

21. *It is known from historical accounts that before his prophetic illumination. The last Divine*

*Messenger, Prophet Muhammad used to go to spiritual seclusions and extended retreats into Mount Hira near Mecca. It is during one of such meditation retreats (in the holy month of Ramadan) in a defining moment of extra-cosmic enlightenment. Divine revelations started to reveal to him. The well-preserved collection of such Divine revelations later came to be known as Quran.*

T F

22. *Meditation is not beneficial in preventing and healing many diseases.*

T F

23. *The negative thoughts associated with stress and anxiety creates imbalance in our natural energetic states, which eventually leads to distortion of our natural energy (Chi), resulting in diseases.*

T F

24. *The benefits of meditation are numerous, the following are a few;*

*Rejuvenation, Improved functionalities and senses, Youthful Appearance and aging processes are slowed, Vitality is increased, blood pressure is lowered, decrease in heart diseases, nervous system is regenerated and brought into balance, stress, anxiety, and fears are reduced, Asthma is decreased as breathing is regulated, immune system becomes stronger able to resist diseases.*

*One becomes more intellectual, endowed with wisdom and knowledge, Intuition is heightened, Thoughts and emotions are more refined due to being calm and at peace with oneself.*

T F

25. *New research is also showing that meditation restores the brain. A landmark study conducted by Massachusetts General Hospital found that as little as eight weeks of meditation not only helped people feel calmer but also produced changes in various areas of the brain, including growth in the areas associated with memory, empathy, sense of self and stress regulation.*

T F



**Course 5- Bachelor Degree Program**  
**Segment 2-Spiritual Teachers and Guides**  
**By Saiyra Akbar and Shahir A Aslam**

*“And in that silence that comes of living solitary as a hermit far from urban centers you come to see as a mystic sees, to hear with more acute ears, until you too, are a part of the simple miracle of living and dying and growing and fading. It takes days and months and even years. Monks, hermits, shamans, all rishis, and holy people, search out this solitude and time for prayer (unendurable labor) because it is the only gateway to the direct experience of God. Be still and know that I am God. But when it comes-we are transformed!” Sophy Burnham, The Book of Angels*

*Since the beginning of time, there have been spiritual guides and teachers that have led people to self-realization and god-realization. Throughout time many spiritual masters have offered teachings in service to humanity. Many who have been inclined toward self-realization have, through a wide variety of different paths reached this goal and gone on to teach others. This process remains a mystery, yet many people at some point in their lives begin to question who they are and seek out teachings to help them answer this question. There are multitudes of different ways that spiritual information is passed on and shared with others. In this course, we will look at some spiritual masters and teachers who have been guides to many. You may either choose to follow one of them or choose your own higher self on your spiritual journey to self-realization, or yet choose any Spiritual teacher or master not mentioned here. It is entirely up to you.*

*Earlyne C. Chaney says in “Astara’s Book of Life Degree 1”, that,  
“...there exists a ladder of evolution and that the world is filled with soul both below you and above you on that ladder. You will at once be able to locate those below you on the evolution scale, struggling through a time in their life*



*expression which marks them as “younger” souls, with much yet to learn concerning life and its laws. It should be obvious that the pages of history are replete with records of outstanding souls, who came to earth and blazed as brilliant lights among humankind. They still are born to shine among us today. Admitting thus that the ladder of evolution exists before your very eyes, it should not be difficult to concede that there are even more highly evolved ones who have completed their earth schooling through many lives of varied experiences. Indeed, it is obvious that if humanity is involved in perpetual evolution-If the goal in human embodiment is ultimate perfection, then, there must be some who have neared this goal. These beings we call the masters that inevitably lead to great achievements, as Jesus explained: “He that believeth in me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do.” (John 14:12)”*

*Chaney goes on to explain how these Masters of Wisdom help guide humanity towards self-realization and god-realization. Their purpose is to inspire individuals on Earth toward greater light greater wisdom. All great world leaders-inventors, writers of spiritual significance, scientists, renowned mystics, great speakers-are indeed so inspired; are guided in their destiny by these great teachers.*

*There are many paths that lead to self-realization and there are three paths to reach the divine within. These pathways are to learn, to serve, to pray. Some will desire to make a spiritual journey through learning, while others will find their greatest satisfaction by serving and working for others, and then further some will prefer the path of devotional prayer or meditation. Lastly, some may practice all three.*

*Earlyne C. Chaney says in “Astara’s Book of Life First Degree,” that,*

*“Those who wish to follow the pathway through learning will be happy only in constant study and searching. They will pursue diligently their studies until they have made them an actual part of their daily lives. But, for example, they may have no desire to practice yoga. Some will wish to follow only the path of service to others in need or to gain entrance by working. Some, devoted to service may find it difficult to approach mental quietude because of the cosmic ray under which they live and move and have their being. It is indeed true that meditation is not possible for everyone-nor even desired. There are some who, on the other hand, find it extremely desirable to “run to the stillness” of meditation and*

*prayer, finding therein a peace and strength the busy-minded could never know. These then are the three paths to the inner temple. It is not for us to say which path you should follow-that is a matter of personal choice. To each his own."*

### **Spiritual Teachers and Guides**

*Institute of Metaphysical Sciences embraces the spiritual and metaphysical teaching of all major religions of the world. I will list a few teachers and spiritual masters that have laid out the Ancient Wisdom teachings.*

#### **Spiritual Teacher Jesus (Isa)**

*This spiritual teacher, the messiah of the Christians is a world teacher, known to all parts of the world. Born in c. 4 B.C., Palestine, he grew up in Nazareth. His life in history and like the historical records of great spiritual teachers and masters are often distorted and used by those in power for political gain. His birth is a mystical birth without a father. The virgin Mary was his mother and Joseph was his adopted father. Jesus taught about unconditional love, forgiveness, sacrifice, the path of righteousness and devotion. He was a healer and great spiritual teacher, and it was his goal to save humanity from the darkness of their own lower self. Jesus was tall and slender, with dark hair and a short beard.*

#### **Sayings of Jesus**

*"Truly I understand that God shows no partiality, but in every nation anyone who fears him and does what is right is acceptable to him." Acts 10:34-35*

*"So, whatever you wish that others would do to you, do also to them for this is the law and the prophets."*

*"I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to God except through me."*

*"And know that I am with you always, yes, to the end of time."*

*"So, I say to you, ask and It will be given to you; Search, and you will find; Knock, and the door will be opened for you."*

*"Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify God who is in heaven."*

*"Get rid of all bitterness, Rage and anger, brawling and slander, along with every form of malice. Be kind and compassionate to one another. Forgiving each other just as Jesus and God forgave you." Ephesians 4:31-32*

*"As for the one who is weak in faith, welcome him, but not to quarrel over opinions." Romans 14:1*

*"There is no longer Jew or Greek. There is no longer slave or free. There, is no longer male or female, for all of you are one."*

*"This is what Jesus says about equality for women: "God wants women to understand their value, importance, and their worth in a culture that speaks quite the opposite. Darlene Brock"*

*"I believe in unconditional love and equality. Jesus Christ exemplified these qualities." Jack Canfield*

### **Spiritual Master Buddha**

*The Buddha also known as Siddhartha Gautama, was another famous world spiritual teacher, and philosopher of Ancient Wisdom. He was born in Nepal, near the border of India. He lived around c. 5<sup>th</sup> to 4<sup>th</sup> Century BCE. He was a world teacher and become known as The Enlightened One, who has escaped the wheels of birth and rebirths, He had annihilated himself within God. He desired to save humanity from disease, sickness, and old age, which came about through our lower desires and the karma we created in life. He is famous for his four noble truths and eightfold path to right living, not harm.*

### **Sayings of Buddha**

*"All Know the way, but very few actually walk it."*

*"The mind is everything, what you think you become."*

*"Don't compare your life to others. There is no comparison between the sun and the moon. They shine when it's their time."*

*"No matter how hard the past, you can always begin again."*

*"Peace begins when the expectation ends."*

*"The root of suffering is attachment to materialistic things."*

*"It is better to conquer yourself than to win a thousand battles. Then the victory is yours. It cannot be taken from you."*

### **Jewish Spiritual Teacher Nachmanides**

*Nachmanides was born Moses' ben Nahman in 1194, Girona, Spain. He was a renowned scholar, a great mystic, philosopher physician and kabbalist of his time. He studied the Talmud extensively, which is a collection of early*

*Babylonian sacred texts and Jewish law and theology. Nachmanides believed that the sacred Torah has an inner mystical meaning.*

*The website [www.myjewishlearning.com/article/nahmanides-ramban](http://www.myjewishlearning.com/article/nahmanides-ramban), explains that Nahmanides, "...accepts the Kabbalistic view that on one level the Torah is a series of combinations of divine names and goes far beyond the actual narratives, which is why, for him, the Torah, in this mystical sense, preceded the events of Moses' life, even though the book of Genesis dealing with events before Moses was born, was also given by God to Moses. The mystical Torah actually preceded the creation of the world."*

*Further in the same website, the article goes on to explain Nachmanides views on some of the Torah verses: "The old puzzle of why the Torah, in the creation narrative, uses the plural:" Let us make man." Genesis 1:26, Nahmanides solves by postulating that God is inviting the whole of creation to take part in the formation of man. Man has a body created out of the dust of the earth, but he also has a soul from the heavenly realms. The soul spurs on man to acquire wisdom and perfection. In his comment on the command to be holy (Leviticus 19:2), Nahmanides understands this to mean that, in his pursuit of holiness, a man has not only to avoid the illicit but, as the Talmudic Rabbis say, he must also sanctify himself by a degree of separation even from things permitted; Otherwise, he could become in Nahmanides' powerful phrase, "a scoundrel with the full permission of the Torah."*

### ***The Spiritual Teacher Ali Ibn Talib***

*The Spiritual teacher Ali Ibn Abi Talib was a universal teacher known by many names. He was cousin and son-in-law to the Islamic Prophet Muhammad who was also a spiritual teacher. He is the first Imam, successor to Prophet Muhammad. He had been blessed by a pure, and noble birth, by being the only individual born in the Holy Kaaba in Mecca, which is the holiest place in Islam. His father was Abu Talib, and his mother was Fatimah's bint Asad. Thomas Carlye, a Scottish philosopher, historian, and mathematician describes Ali as Divine and that he is for all of humanity. He says,*

*"As for this young Ali, one cannot but like him. A noble-minded creature, as he shows himself, now and always afterward, full of affection, of fiery daring something chivalrous in him, brave as a lion, yet with a grace, truth and affection worthy a Christian Knighthood."*

*He was fair in coloring, tall, and muscular built. A Silent Warrior, he was known as the Lion of God, the most courageous of all men of his time. His teachings are*

*recorded in the Nahjul Balagha and in some Sufi orders, as he is the Father of Sufism. All Sufi orders come from Ali's mystical teachings. Divine Ali was great thinker and a master of knowledge and wisdom. His knowledge extended to disciplines such as, math, physics, psychology, numerology, astronomy, medicine, and history.*

### **Sayings of Ali**

*"You are all equal. Nobody has superiority over others, except by piety and good action."*

*"Feed the hungry, and visit the sick person, and free the captive, if he/she be unjustly confirmed. Assist any oppressed person, whether Muslim or non-Muslim."*

*"The basis of religion is the gnosis of God. He is beyond all attributes. No attribute can give an idea of his exact nature. He is not bound by anything; all things are bound by him. He is infinite, limitless, boundless, beyond time, beyond space, beyond imagination."*

### **Sayings of Muhammad**

*"You do not do evil to those who do evil to you, but you deal with them with forgiveness and kindness."*

*"Who is Muhammad? He is the one who loved the sinner, embraced the strange, enriched the poor, visited the ill, and forgave the enemy."*

*"The greatest struggle is to battle your own soul, to fight the evil within yourself."*

*"Don't depend too much on anyone in this world because even your own shadow leaves you when you are in darkness."*

### **Spiritual Teacher Krishna**

*The spiritual teacher Krishna is an ancient deity of the Hindu religion. He is the eighth avatar of the god Vishnu. He teaches compassion, love, and forgiveness, and in many ways is likened to Jesus and Ali. He was known as, "The all-attractive", with almond skin tone, tall and muscular built. A warrior of his time. His Teachings are recorded in the Bhagavad Gita.*

### **Sayings of Krishna**

*"Do forgive all before you go to sleep. You'll be forgiven before you get up."*

*"To love without condition, to talk without intention, to give without reason, and to give without expectation, that's the spirit of true love."*

*"The soul who meditates on the self is content to serve the self and rests satisfied within the self; there remains nothing more for him to accomplish."*

*"To show them special mercy, I, dwelling in their hearts, destroy with the shining lamp of knowledge the darkness born of ignorance."*

### **Spiritual Teacher Lao Tzu**

*Lao Tzu lived between 300 and 600 BC, and his teachings are recorded in the Tao Te Ching, the holy book of Chinese Ancient Wisdom. It is a collection of various Chinese sages. Lao Tzu is considered an older, wise master of Ancient Wisdom. He was born with white hair and an appearance of an old man.*

*Confucious was his student, who was also an incredibly famous Chinese Spiritual teacher. Lao Tzu is a mysterious mystic who came to teach humanity how to connect to the supreme being, the Tao, and the way of the cosmos. Also, he taught the mysteries of the universe and the way to live a righteous life. His teachings are recorded in the Tao Te Ching, which is translated as "The Way of Virtue."*

### **Sayings of Lao Tzu**

*"Knowing others is wisdom, Knowing the self is enlightenment. Mastering others requires force.*

*Mastering the self needs strength. May you discover the keys to your enlightenment."*

*"Be content with what you have. Rejoice in the way things are. When you realize there is nothing lacking, the whole world belongs to you."*

*"A journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step."*

*"To regard the fundamental as the essence, to regard things as coarse. To regard accumulation as a deficiency, and to dwell quietly alone with the spiritual and the intelligent-herein lie the techniques of Tao."*

*"Knowledge is a treasure, but practice is the key to it."*

*"Every step is on the path."*

*"The Master observes the world but trust his inner vision. He allows things to come and go. His heart is open as the sky."*

### **Spiritual Teacher Thich Nhat Hahn**

*Thich Nhat Hahn was born in 1926 in Vietnam and is a noble-minded Buddhist monk, whose teachings and wisdom have touched many. He helped many people in the Vietnam War and believed in a non-violent society and way of living. He worked towards advising world leaders to use non-violence and embrace a peaceful co-existence. He was exiled in 1966 for undermining the war efforts of both sides, North and South Vietnam. Since then, he has lived in Plum Village, a monastery in Southern France. He has become a citizen of the world. He has written many books on peace, meditation, and mindfulness.*

### **Sayings of Thich Nhat Hahn**

*"Enlightenment is growing all the time. It is not something that happens once and is then complete."*

*"Anxiety, the illness of our time, comes primarily from our inability to live in the present moment."*

*"When we live in the spirit of gratitude, there will be much happiness in our life. The one who is grateful is the one who will have much happiness in life, while the one who is ungrateful will not be able to have happiness."*

*"It is not impermanence, that makes us suffer. What makes us suffer is wanting things to be permanent when they are not."*

*"The most precious gift we can offer anyone is our attention. When mindfulness embraces those, we love, they will bloom like flowers."*

*"Keeping your body healthy is an expression of gratitude to the whole cosmos- the trees, the clouds, everything."*

*"Our own life has to be a message."*

*"You can practice walking meditation between meetings, on the way to your car, up or down stairs. When you walk anywhere, allow enough time to practice. Instead of three minutes, give yourself eight or ten. I always leave for the airport an extra hour early, so I can practice walking meditation there. Friends want to keep me until the last minute, but I resist. I tell them that I need the time."*

*"The practice of walking meditation opens your eyes to the wonders and the suffering of the universe. If you are not aware of what is going on around you, where do you expect to encounter ultimate reality? Every path can be a walking*

*meditation path, from tree-lined roadsides and fragrant rice paddles to the back alleys of Mostar and the mine-filled dirt roads of Cambodia. When you are awake, you will not hesitate to enter any path. You will suffer, not just from your own worries and fears, but because of your love for all beings. When you open yourself in this way, your companions will be other beings on the path of awakening who share your insight. They will work with you, side by side, to alleviate the world's suffering."*

### **Spiritual Teacher Dalai Lama**

*Lhamo Dhondup (also known as Tenzin Gyatso) was born in Tibet in 1935. He is the 14<sup>th</sup> Dalai Lama. He is considered the rightful leader of Tibet, but the Chinese government exiled the Dalai Lama in 1956 and he was forced to settle in India. Dharamsala which is at the foot of the Himalayas. Many of his followers and believers (Tibetans) followed him to Dharamsala, thus this place became the official residence of the exiled Tibetans and called it "Little Lhasa ", the capital city of The Tibetans. Since then, the Dalai Lama has tried unsuccessfully to gain their native land from the Chinese, but to no avail. His efforts have been recognized on a global scale. He teaches of love, compassion, forgiveness, of living in a peaceful co-existence with others. He has written many books on prayer, meditation, and peaceful solutions to world problems. He is a humble, wise, and gentle teacher to the world.*

### **Sayings of The Dalai Lama**

*"Do not let the behaviors of others destroy your inner peace."*

*"Forgiveness doesn't mean forget what happened, if something is serious and it is necessary to take counter-measures, then take counter-measures."*

*"A Precious Human Life*

*Every day, think as you wake up, Today I am fortunate to have woken up. I am alive. I have a precious human life. I am not going to waste it.*

*I am going to use all my energies to develop myself. To expand my heart To others, to achieve enlightenment for the benefit if all beings. I am going to have kind thoughts toward others. I am not going to get*



*Angry, or think badly about others. I am going to benefit others as much as I can."*

*"The whole purpose of religion is to facilitate love and compassion, patience, tolerance, humility, and forgiveness."*

*"The goal is not to be better than the other man, but better than your previous self."*

*"There are only two days in the year that nothing can be done, one is called yesterday and the other is called tomorrow. Today is the right day to Love, Believe, Do, and mostly Live."*

### ***Spiritual Teacher Sufi Mystic Shams Tabrizi***

*Shams Tabrizi was born Shams Al-Din in 1185 in Tabriz, Iran. He was renowned gnostic and Sufi mystic. He traveled from place to place weaving baskets and selling girdles for a living. Some scholars put his genealogy among the Ismaili Sayyids and there he holds a special place in the Imams family. Other accounts put Shams and his mystical teachings coming from the Father of Sufism, Ali Ibn Abu Talib. Shams is seen as a guide of Allah's love for mankind; Shams was a considered a sun for his students, giving them the light, knowledge, and wisdom. The name Shams means the sun in Arabic, whose shining light dispels the darkness of heart, mind, and body for the mystics on the path to self-realization. Shams recorded some of his work in his Persian Prose book 'Discourse of Shams-i-Tabrizi.' The discourse seems to be written during his later years and contains spiritual advice. Some of his thoughts are:*

*"Blessing is excess, so to speak, an excess of everything. Do not be content with being a scholar, say I want more light, knowledge and wisdom-more than being a Sufi, more than being a mystic-more than each thing that comes before you. Light is ever-evolving opening new knowledge." (This is acquiring life-long education.)*

*One of his students was Rumi, the great Sufi Mystic.*

### ***Spiritual Teacher Helena Petrovna Blavatsky***

*Helena Blavatsky was born in Russia, 12<sup>th</sup> August 1831. She traveled around the world as a child. And developed an interest in mystical and esoteric sciences in her teenage age years. In 1840 she met with a Master of Ancient Wisdom who guided her to pursue a deeper understanding of religion, philosophy, and*

science. This leads her eventually to co-find The Theosophical Society with Olcott and William Quan Judge. She believed that there was an Ancient Wisdom underlying all the world religions. She has published various books on the Ancient Wisdom teachings, including *The Secret Doctrine*, *Isis Unveiled*, and *The Voice of the Silence*.

### **Sayings of Helena Petrovna Blavatsky**

*"Matter is spirit at its lowest level. Spirit is matter at its highest level."*

*"One who does his/her best does all that can be asked."*

*"Be humble if thou would attain wisdom. Be humbler still when wisdom thou hast mastered."*

*"The essence of truth cannot be transmitted from ear to mouth. Nor can any pen describe it unless man finds it in the sanctuary of his own heart, in the innermost depths of his divine intuitions."*

*"True spiritual perfection and knowledge are nothing else but the complete identification of our finite selves with the Great All."*

*"Stars teach as well as shine, although their secrets are still untold and unrevealed to the majority of men."*

*"The path that leadeth on, is lighted by one fire-the light of daring, burning in the heart. The more one dares, the more he shall obtain."*

### **Spiritual Teacher Saint Teresa of Avila**

Saint Teresa was born 28 March 1515 in Avila, Spain. Her full name was Teresa de Cepeda Ahumada. She was a noblewoman, mystic, and theologian. She joined the monastery of the Carmelite order, as her calling to serve humanity. In her early years, she suffered through family loss and illness, while experiencing states of spiritual ecstasy. The website

[www.en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Teresa\\_of\\_Avila](http://www.en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Teresa_of_Avila) says that, "She (Teresa) reported that during her illness, she had risen from the lowest stage, "recollection," to the "devotions of silence," or even to the "devotions of ecstasy." Which was one of perfect union with God." She had visionary experiences with Jesus and was given the name Saint Teresa of Jesus. Teresa of Avila is known for the reformation work of the Carmelite monastery for nuns. She established humble, pious, simple ways to live within the monastery while serving the community with kindness and compassion. Later, she was joined by Juan De La Cruz, who helped her in her mission by establishing the men's side of the monastery. Their combined work

included paths to perfection for those who chose that path. The website [www.catholicculture.org/culture/library/view.cfm?id=7725](http://www.catholicculture.org/culture/library/view.cfm?id=7725), say that,

*“St. Teresa realized that not all souls travel by the same path to perfection, but that God leads souls by many different roads. At the same time, she knew that to teach the theology and practice of prayer, one must follow a basic pattern or structure. The journey to spiritual perfection is a progressive passage from the lower to higher stages of prayer.”*

Further in the same website, the grades of prayers are given, which are seen below:

- *“Vocal Prayer: with attention to what one is saying or reading about God, whom one is addressing.*
- *Discursive Meditation: consideration of a spiritual truth; application to oneself and resolve to do something about it.*
- *Affective Mental Prayer: one turns to “other” namely, God, and prayer becomes “the language of love.”*
- *Acquired Recollection: also called prayer of simplicity, prayer of simple regard, acquired contemplation the loving awareness of God.*
- *Infused Recollection: The first degree of infused, mystical contemplation.*
- *Prayer of Quiet: The will is totally captivated by divine love; sometimes all the faculties are likewise captivated (sleep or ecstasy).*
- *Prayer of Simple Union: Both the intellect and the will are absorbed in God.*
- *Prayer of Ecstatic Union: This is the “Mystical Espousal,” or “Conforming Union.”*
- *Prayer of Transforming Union: Also called the “Mystical Marriage,” because it is the most intimate union of the soul with God that is possible in this life.”*

### ***Some Quotes from Saint Teresa of Avila:***

*“Let nothing disturb you. Let nothing frighten you. Everything passes away except God. God alone is sufficient.”*

*“For Prayer is nothing else than being on terms of friendship with God.”*

*“I believe that God helps those who set out to do great things for His sake and never fails those who trust in Him alone.”*

*“God has been very good to me, for I never dwell upon anything wrong which a person has done, so as to remember it, I always see some other virtues in that person.”*

*“It is love alone that gives worth to all things.”*

*Teach by works more than by words."*

### **Spiritual Teacher Peter Deunov**

*Peter Deunov, a priest, from Bulgaria was born July 12, 1864. He was given the spiritual name of Beinsa Douno due to his vast knowledge and wisdom in the mystical arts. He was a philosopher and spiritual teacher, who after extensive studies of theology and Christian esoterism developed the Universal Light Brotherhood. Peter Dunoff gave his first lecture in 1914, in the town of Sofia, the Capital of Bulgaria. From then on, he became a spiritual leader and by 1921, he created a community called Izgrev (sunrise) at the outskirts of Sofia. Here all his followers would gather at sunrise in a lecture hall to give his lectures. He gave lectures in philosophy, esoteric science, astrology, geometry, and religion. Gradually, Peter Dunoff started to create a sunrise ritual called the Pan eurhythm. This ritual is more a series of exercise and postures performed to a traditional Bulgarian music. The dance ritual is performed in a circle. Pan eurhythm is like yoga in the sense that, it is done to achieve balance, harmony, and well-being, while promoting self-development and expanding consciousness. This early morning exercise is usually done outside in wide, green spaces like a meadow. The purpose was to enhance holistic health by bringing the physical, spiritual, and mental capabilities in alignment with each other and the cosmos. Pan eurhythm comes from three roots, Pan- Which means the whole, everything, the cosmic expression. Eu-means the essential, the supreme, or the true. Whereas Rhythm- means cycles, periods, cyclic movement. Thus, Pan eurhythm implies the Cosmic Dance, the Cosmic Sublime Rhythm, or the True (Supreme) Cosmic Rhythm. This dance, ritual is the notion of living in balance with nature and the cosmic forces, basically keeping in flow with the ever-evolving consciousness.*

### **Other Spiritual Teachers are:**

- *Rudolf Steiner, Metaphysician, Mystic, Theologian from Austria.*
- *G.I. Gurdjieff, born in Cappadocian, Greek quarter of Alexandropol*
- *Babaji, Spiritual Teacher from India.*
- *The Righteous One of the Essenes, and The Way of Light*
- *Imam Mahdi, The Rightly Guided One, Universal Savior*
- *Khizar, The Sufi Mystic, Universal Spiritual Teacher*
- *Henry Corbin, Theologian, Philosopher, Spiritual Teacher*
- *Saiyra Akbar, Metaphysician, Spiritual Teacher, Mystic*

### **Attributes of a Spiritual Teacher**

- *A good spiritual teacher will never judge you; he/she will be compassionate and kind, will show unconditional love and understanding.*
- *A good Spiritual Teacher is egoless, does not attach importance to himself/herself.*
- *Respects all of humanity, all races, and cultures.*
- *A good spiritual teacher is wise, patient, and understanding.*
- *A good spiritual teacher will never force you against your will, nor will he/she manipulate you to do something against your will, rather he will suggest, recommend, and advise.*
- *A good spiritual teacher will inspire you, encourage, raise your confidence and self-esteem.*
- *A good Spiritual teacher does not argue. They know that no amount of argument would convince the skeptic or naysayers.*
- *A good spiritual teacher does not consider him/herself to be a master. They are humble.*
- *When the student is ready, the teacher will appear. Seek and you shall find. Knock and the door shall be open for you, Is the creed of the Spiritual Teacher. They will never force themselves upon you.*
- *A good spiritual teacher encourages you to look within your own self, to find the answers you seek. We all hold the essence of the divine. Find the guide within.*
- *A good spiritual teacher encourages you to pray, self-contemplation, meditation, to know thyself in the silent mind. He/she will lead you to the paths of self-realization.*

### **How to Create a Connection with a Spiritual Teachers**

*Earlyne C. Chaney says in her book, "Astara's Book of Life, First Degree," That by meditating on Inspirational Sources you will be able to make a connection with a spiritual teacher, she says,*

*"There is nothing more excellent than meditating upon a great being such as Jesus, the Christ or the Virgin Mary, The blessed Buddha, Moses, Krishna, Mohammad-or a great spiritual teacher. There is an ancient adage which states: you become like that upon which you meditate. If you reflect daily upon your perfect ideal of humanity, you grow perpetually toward the ideal. As your mind centers upon a certain spiritual being of your choice, you*

*establish a contact of which the Divine One inevitably becomes aware. As time advances and you hold your "Teacher," in your mental eye, you will become more and more able to quiet the lower mind. As the lower mind becomes stilled the higher mind expands and it is through this mental expansion that the Masters' reach you individually. After a teacher becomes aware, of being selected as a seeker's meditative ideal, the teacher awaits the opportunity to make contact. Each day as you meditate you will become more and more efficient in quieting the lower mind until one day its surface will have become completely stilled. When this occurs, you will suddenly sense a great light beginning to shine somewhere in your consciousness, and then, in a burst of mental expansion and light, you will behold the Master upon whom you have meditated. It will be a spiritual experience, the Teacher appearing in a vivid vision, or in an inner burst of light." When the seeker is ready, the Master will appear." or, when the mind of the seeker, through meditation or prayer is prepared, the Master makes direct contact. After this experience, it is not so difficult for you to practice the focusing of your mind, yet there never comes a time when practice is not necessary-just as the greatest musician must constantly polish his/her technique."*

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